

Message Text

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USDOCOSOUTH

CINCUSAFE

USDELMC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 9628

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR GR

SUBJECT: CABINET SHUFFLE

1. THE LONG PREDICTED PARTIAL CABINET REFHUFFLE ANNOUNCED BY PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS SEPTEMBER 10 (SEE SEPTTEL) WAS CARRIED OUT WITH HIS CUSTOMARY TOUCH OF SURPRISE AND DRAMA. BUT THE SHIFTS IN THEMSELVES PREFIGURE NO CHANGE IN POLICIES OR DIRECTION FOR THE CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT. RATHER, IT IS AN ATTEMPT TO INFUSE THE ADMINISTRATION WITH INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS, BRING NEW BLOOD TO POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND, NOT COINCIDENTALLY, TO PROJECT THE IMAGE OF A FORWARD LOOKING, YOUNGISH AND DYNAMIC GOVERNMENT.

2. THE BYZANTINE BUREAUCRACY HERE IS ONE OF THE MAJOR
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OBSTACLES AS GREECE SEEKS TO SUSTAIN ITSELF AS A SUCCESS-

FUL, MODERN DEMOCRACY. WHILE WE EXPECT NO MIRACLES FROM THIS NEW CABINET GROUP WE BELIEVE IT IS A POSITIVE STEP TOWARDS DEALING WITH THE INFLEXIBLE, SCLEROTIC AND AT TIMES OBSTRUCTIONIST BUREAUCRACY THAT IS SUCH A BURDEN TO ANY GREEK GOVERNMENT.

3. AGRICULTURE FIGURES TO BE ONE OF THE MOST SENSITIVE AND DIFFICULT SECTORS AS GREECE ADJUSTS TO FULL MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. DRAMATIC CHANGES WILL BE REQUIRED IN EVERYTHING FROM LAND TENURE PATTERNS TO THE KINDS OF CROPS FARMERS SOW IF GREECE IS TO BE A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY MEMBER. THE APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE OF JOHN BOUTOS WITH TWO NEW DEPUTIES IS AN ATTEMPT TO GEAR A RATHER TIRED MINISTRY UP TO AN IMMENSE TASK. BY NATIVE INTELLIGENCE AND EXPERIENCE IN GOVERNMENT, BOUTOS IS AN EXCELLENT CHOICE FOR THE JOB. IF HE CAN OVERCOME HIS REPUTATION FOR BEING SOMETHING OF A DIFFICULT MAN TO WORK WITH, BOUTOS' APPOINTMENT WILL FULFILL ITS PROMISE, GIVING GREECE THE RIGHT MAN IN THE RIGHT JOB AT THE RIGHT TIME.

4. AT THE SUB-CABINET LEVEL, THE CHANGES BRING THE MINISTERIAL STRUCTURE INTO CONFORMITY WITH LEGISLATION PASSED THIS SUMMER RESTRUCTURING THE ENTIRE CABINET FOR GREATER ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS. IN THE PROCESS, CARAMANLIS HAS GIVEN NEW FACES IN HIS PARTY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FIRST TIME: EIGHT OF THE NEW DEPUTY MINISTERS ARE FIRST-TIME MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT. AND OF THE EIGHT, SEVERAL ARE AMONG THE YOUNGEST AND MOST PROMISING MEMBERS OF HIS PARTY (E.G., EVERT TZATZIKOSTAS AND ANDRIANOPOULOS, WHO IS ONLY 30). AND AMONG THE OTHER APPOINTEES HE HAS MOVED FORWARD SOME PROMISING MID-LEVEL MEN (E.G.) RENDIS, KALANTZAKOS, KEFALOYANNIS). OF COURSE, THE NEW CABINET INCLUDES ITS SHARE OF OLD FACES (E.G., DAVIKIS WHO AT 69 HAS BEEN ELECTED DEPUTY EIGHT TIMES).

5. THE CABINET CHANGES ARE NOTABLE FOR WHAT DID NOT TAKE PLACE. THE LEGISLATION RESHAPING THE CABINET MAKES PROVISION FOR TWO DEPUTY PRIME MINISTERS. ONE THE PENDING CABINET SHUFFLE WAS ANNOUNCED, ATHENS CAME ABUZZ
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WITH RUMORS AND SPECULATION AS TO WHOM AMONG THE FOUR PRESUMPTIVE HEIRS TO CARAMANLIS WOULD BE NAMED TO THESE POSITIONS: MINISTER OF DEFENSE AVEROFF, MINISTER OF COORDINATION PAPALIGOURAS, MINISTER TO THE PRESIDENCY AND MINISTER OF EDUCATION RALLIS, AND PRESIDENT OF THE PARLIAMENT PAPA-CONSTANTINOU. CARMANLIS NAMED NO ONE TO THESE POSITIONS AND GOVERNMENT SOURCES ARE TELLING THE PRESS THAT THERE IS NO FURTHER CABINET SHUFFLE EXPECTED UNTIL SOMETIME NEXT

YEAR, SOME SAY THE MIDDLE OF 1977. SO
POLITICIANS ARE NOT LEFT TO ADD UP WHICH
OF THE FOUR PRESUMPTIVE DAUPHINS PLACED MORE OF HIS
FOLLOWERS IN THE NEW CABINET -- A FRUSTRATING AND NOT
PARTICULARLY PRODUCTIVE GAME.

6. FINALLY, BUT NOT INCIDENTALLY, NOR WE SUSPECT ACCI-
DENTALLY, THE CABINET RESHUFFLE HAS HELPED STRENGTHEN
THE CLIMATE OF "NORMALITY" IN THE WAKE OF THE
ANXIETIES AND FEARS GREEKS DEVELOPED OVER THE AEGEAN LAST
MONTH. THE UNIVERSAL PUBLIC REACTION TO THE CABINET CHANGES
HAS BEEN TO ACCEPT THE GOVERNMENT'S EXPLANATIONS THAT THEY
ARE DESIGNED TO INCREASE GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS. THE
OPPOSITION IS STILL TRYING TO DEVELOP SOME PUBLIC RESPONSE
TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S MOVES. IN PRIVATE, MODERATE
MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION SEEM PLEASED. IN
SPEAKING TO US YESTERDAY, ONE YOUNGER MEMBER OF THE UNION
OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER, THE MAJOR OPPOSITION FORCE, WAS
ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE ENTRY OF YOUNGER NEW DEMOCRACY
MEMBERS INTO THE GOVERNMENT, A MOOD THAT HE TOLD US
EXTENDS TO MOST OF HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE PARLIAMENT.
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